

Exhibition - Gallery 26 November 28, 1962
October 9 through ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ in R.P. - 7.17.62

R. 7.16.62 Page B

MODERN ART IN MODEST SIZE

"A good big painting is better than a good little painting" thinks the neophyte and his opinion receives reassurance when he visits galleries dealing in modern art and finds that paintings are sold by the square foot. "A 9' x 6'? yes sir, they run twenty-five hundred dollars; the 12' x 8' size is thirty-two hundred."

The cynic on the other hand quickly discerns the absurdity and with some witty reference to yard goods, dismisses all art produced in the present.

In fact, as a little thought will show, this is the only reasonable way that an honest merchant can sell works of art unless he is arrogant enough and presumptuous enough to try and settle questions of aesthetic quality personally and on the spot. Even the old masters considered size when selling their own works. Measurement is an objective scale of reference, and, assuming that an artist's work will be on a relatively uniform level of quality, it at least provides a method of arriving at a not completely absurd figure for sales.

Such a method, however, provides an advantage for the collector, particularly of modest means. If his taste is good, he can in many instances acquire fine examples by important artists at relatively low cost. The strictly measurable properties of the works of art have been properly labelled and priced. But the crucial area of quality, which yields only to the subjective - to taste and sensitivity - remains open to the connoisseur; and this is his only great advantage.

He must always be aware, however, that in many instances size does make a difference. A fine big canvas by Kline or Pollock or Rothko is not at all the same as a small work by one of these artists. In some cases the whole character of the work is different. In a few instances the small works are not as significant as the large ones. There are, let it be said, cases where the reverse is true, where the works of a particular artist (e.g. Tobey, Nicholson) lose some of their quality when their dimensions are greatly inflated.

The present exhibition has been selected specifically to present works of art by important living artists which are of modest size and price but which are of a high level of quality.

Edward B. Henning

June 11, 1962